We append to our present remarks a report of the proceedings at the last meeting of the commissioners, as they bear chiefly on the matter in question.

A court was held on Friday, the 16th inst.; Capt. Bague in the chair. Relative to the "Act to explain and amend the laws of sewers relating to the city and liberty of Westminster, and part of Middlesex," of which we have been speaking, it was resolved, on the suggestion of the solicitor, that as it was now required by it that no houses should be built unless a sewer to carry off the drainage thereof be first constructed, advertisements should be inserted in the newspapers to inform all builders and owners of property of the heavy penalties to which they will be subject in neglecting the provisions of this Act.

Mr. Willoughby then rose to bring before the court, the motion of which notice had been given, viz., "That the court consider as to appointing a committee to consider of the best means of carrying into operation the provisions of the new Act, or as to the most convenient mode of making the proper arrangements towards the discharge of the enlarged functions now imposed on the court" In doing which he said, that as the Act had received the royal assent, it was their duty to take steps as to the best mode of carrying it into effect. The court had never before been invested with powers adequate and applicable to the wants of the community. He trusted they would do nothing hastily, but carry out the Act discreetly, cautiously, and wisely, with advantage to the public and credit to themselves. He thought the best course was to refer the whole question to a committee, and thereby have a well-considered scheme that might form the base for future discussion.

A commissioner having inquired if it was proposed to have an open committee or a select one, the mover said he had certainly not contemplated an open committee, believing it would be better to refer the question to some five or six members than to leave it to the whole court, where propositions might be brought forward on the moment without having received due consideration. At the same time he was favourable to the fullest discussion of the whole subject after the committee had made their report.

Mr. Le Breton objected to the course proposed, and hoped that all would be open, fair, and above-board; and in the mode in which the bill was carried, when there were no committees and no secret proceedings. It would be in the recollection of hon. gentlemen, that the bill was gone through, clause by clause, in open court, and opinions elicited, which opinions had since become the law of the land. He hoped they would carry it out in open court, without reference to committees, select or otherwise.

Mr. J. White was in favour of a special court being called, to take the whole question into consideration, but to let all be done fairly and openly, and before the public at large.—Mr. Baylis concurred in the opinion of Mr. White.—Mr. W. Donaldson was surprised at the objection to the appointment of a committee. He should support the motion.—Mr. Brown thought the whole affair might be best brought before the court by the appointment of a committee.—Mr. Cumberlege said, before the Act passed, the bill was discussed in open court. He therefore supported the motion for the proceedings being open.

A division being called for, the room was ordered to be cleared, when there appeared—

For the motion 16
Against it 16

The chairman, thus becoming the arbiter of the matter, gave his vote in favour of the proceedings by open court.

A communication was received from the Westminster Improvement Commissioners, as as to the new mode of drainage from Vauxhall-road to New Victoria-street. The surveyor approved of the plan, and said the proposed work would form the base of the improvements of the entire city of Westminster. The surveyor was instructed to confer with Mr. Abraham, the architect to the Westminster Improvement Commissioners, on the subject.

A letter was read from Messrs. Elliott, the brewers, in which those gentlemen stated that it was their wish, as the King's Scholars' Pond sewer was now being partly arched over, that this desirable improvement should be continued from the Vauxhall-bridge road to Pimlico, and that they were willing to subscribe 450*l.*, or 15*s.* per foot, as their share of the expense. The court considered it a liberal offer, and acceded on their part to the terms specified. It was also ordered that advertisements for tenders for the performance of the work should be immediately issued, to be received at the next court.

agitation of sanatory reform, unless they bestir themselves with energy and exertion in setting their respective towns "in order" by improved drainage (as suggested at so cheap a rate), paving, flagging, and cleansing, and a cheap supply of water and gas. These are subjects of momentous importance to all of us, and the expense of which would soon be repaid by the reduction of the local taxation (in poor rates), and the better health we should enjoy in the bosoms of our families. The Health of Towns Bill having been withdrawn for this session, we trust, on its introduction in an amended form next session, that clauses will be re-introduced to repeal the window tax and the tax on glass, as the lack of light and ventilation are some of the greatest curses our cottage population are labouring under. Instead of levying taxes that stop up the windows of our houses, which obstruct the light and air of heaven, we would tax those that failed to put a sufficient number in their houses, and who therefore neglected the laws of ventilation and health. The window tax is a tax of such an odious and barbarous character, that it is totally unworthy of a country that boasts so much of its civilisation.

B. B.

ON THE NATURE, OBJECTS, AND INSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS OF DESIGN.

The following is the letter to Mr. Shaw Lefevre, referred to in our last week's paper:—

"38, Arlington-street, Camden Town.

Sir,—In stating, at your request, my opinions on schools of design, I think it necessary to explain any terms which I may have occasion to use in a more special and limited sense than as they are ordinarily employed. The two most important of these are *industrial* and *artistic*. By *industry*, I do not mean simple labour, but any process by which raw materials are converted into objects of convenience or utility; and by *art*, such exertions of the inventive or combining powers as will produce objects calculated to suggest ideas of sublimity or beauty. These definitions, though a little vague, will be, I apprehend, sufficiently accurate for present purposes; and I may, therefore, take it as understood, that the primary object of industrial production is physical usefulness; and of artistic production, mental excitement.

In order to determine what an education in design should be, we must first endeavour to form some notion of what design itself is; until we have settled the end to be attained, it is worse than useless to discuss the means of attainment. The purpose of design is to superadd to the utility of industrial productions such artistic decoration as, without destroying their usefulness, will render them pleasing to that mental faculty, or rather that combination of mental faculties known by the name of taste. Design, then, in its nature is both industrial and artistic, and its industrial elements are the more numerous and more important of the two.

Before any consideration of art arises, the designer must know the *amount* of decoration that the materials with which he has to deal are capable of receiving, and the *kind* of decoration suited to the purposes to which the article produced is about to be applied. Design, taught without any reference to capability of materials and appropriateness of purpose, is even more ridiculous than the establishment of a manufactory for ruffles in a country where people are unacquainted with shirts.

Every artist receives an industrial education: the painter learns the art of mixing and combining colours so as to produce varieties of tints; the sculptor learns how to wield the hammer and chisel; but there is this difference between the artist and the designer, that the artist himself realizes his own conceptions, while the conceptions of the designer are only realized by the intervention of the manufacturer. Hence, though designers, such as Flaxman, have risen to be great artists, it is one of the rarest things in the world to find an artist producing a good and practicable design. Cartoons, of course, must be excepted, and perhaps arabesques; but these have, after all, very little relation to the works likely to be demanded from the designers suited to a large manufacturing country.

It does so happen that convenience and beauty are often very closely allied; and this alliance is pointed out by mathematical science. The curves of the conic section applied to vessels of capacity, for instance, give us at once the most graceful forms and the most capacious articles. In all architectural designs there is an absolute necessity for perfect horizontal level and perfect perpendicular elevation. People have found beauty in the leaning tower of Pisa; but I nearly found my death in the leaning wall of a cottage: and I doubt whether any beauty of oblique angles would afford consolation to ghosts. Some of the most effective patterns in silks, produced this year at Paris, were geometric combinations of straight lines. Some knowledge of mathematics is, therefore, essential to successful design; and it is even of more importance than the highest excellence of pictorial art, because stability is more of a primary consideration than mere ornament.

An artist, of course, has nothing to do with any such mechanical considerations as stability or convenience; but unless a designer works for mechanics, he had much better not work at all. We go to artists for pictures; but we go to designers for tea-pots; and the best figure-drawing in the world would console very few of us for having our breakfasts spoiled. The *ornamental* comes *after the useful*. Giving exclusive prominence to the ornamental leads only to the production of the useless, a species of production which, in my opinion, does not require or deserve national encouragement.

A designer, I grant, is neither a machine-maker nor a machine-worker, but he is a machine-user, and therefore he can never know his business well without some knowledge both of mechanical science, or, as I may call it, dynamics, and also of the practical working of machinery. But, to make this knowledge complete, there should be added to it the elements of statics, for questions of equilibrium very often arise in discussing the composition of forces. I may be told that these have no relation to art; but I beg it to be understood, that I am writing on the education of designers and not on the education of artists. Flower patterns are among the most common and popular forms of design, and a knowledge of botany is absolutely necessary to their effective production. I have seen groups produced by English designers in which the flowers of spring and autumn were absurdly blended, the natural characteristics of the plants utterly lost, and the harmonies of nature, which art may imitate but cannot mend, thereby effectually destroyed. The climbing of the convolvulus affords an admirable archetype for patterns, and has, therefore, been often copied in design; but one sticks on his convolvulus stem the flowers of the ranunculus, and another gives to the climbing plant the form of prehension which belongs only to the creeping or the pendant plant. The blunders of this kind are without number—

. . . "Velut ægri somnia, vanæ
Finguntur species: ut nec pes, nec caput uni
Reddatur formæ."

For these *vanæ species* I would venture to propose the *species* and *genera* of natural science—that is, of Nature herself, sciences being merely the classification of observed facts.

Some portion of zoology would be useful, for in many designs animal forms are introduced, and, what is not less important, animal substances supply many of the materials on which design is to be exercised.

But no science is of more importance to the designer than chemistry; and in no department of science is England more defective than in the chemistry of colour. I must, however, make an exception in favour of our porcelain manufacture, which has within the last few years outstripped the production of Dresden and Sevres. Now, a designer making a pattern without knowing the means by which the shades he introduces can be realised, is almost certain to go astray. All the designers for silk at Lyons are excellent chemists; they have for the most part been educated at the admirable school at La Martiniere, where a very extensive and practical industrial course precedes, and is made the basis of, artistic instruction. One of the best designers, in his particular department, in England, is Mr. Battam, the artist to the pottery and porcelain works of Messrs. Copeland and Garratt. He is not only well acquainted with the chemistry of colour, and the effects produced on his material by firing, but he has also studied the combinations best suited to produce the porce-

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